

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 DRC-01 /099 W

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R 142031Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY NASSAU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5027

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E. O. 11652:N/A

TAGS: PINT PGOV BF

SUBJ: FRANCIS AND MOXEY OUT?

SUMMARY: LOCAL MEDIA ARE REPORTING THAT CARLTON FRANCIS HAS RESIGNED AS MINISTER OF DEVELOPMENT AND THAT EDMUND MOXEY HAS BEEN FIRED AS PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT. SOURCES CLOSE TO THOSE INDIVIDUALS HAVE TOLD EMBASSY THE REPORTS ARE TRUE. NO OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS HAVE BEEN MADE YET. END SUMMARY

1. THE PROXIMATE CAUSES OF THESE TWO REPORTED CHANGES OCCURRED DURING THE DECEMBER 12 HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY SESSION. FIRST, WHILE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER HANNA WAS SUBMITTING THE 1974 BUDGET, EDMUND MOXEY, PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, ENTERED THE CHAMBER WEARING LARGE HANDWRITTEN PLACARDS ACCUSING PRIME MINISTER PINDLING AND HANNA OF NEGLECTING YOUTH PROJECTS. SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE BUTLER PUBLICLY REBUKED MOXEY FOR HIS LACK OF DECORUM. ON DECEMBER 13 PINDLING AND HANNA APPARENTLY DECIDED MOXEY WOULD HAVE TO GO.

2. LATER IN THE DECEMBER 12 SESSION, THERE WAS EXTENDED DEBATE ON OPPOSITION LEADER KENDAL ISAACS' RESOLUTION TO CONDEMN GOVERNMENT FOR ITS ANNOUNCED POLICY OF TAKING OVER THE CASINOS IN 1976 (THE RESOLUTION ULTIMATELY WAS DEFEATED BY A LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WIDE MARGIN). DEVELOPMENT MINISTER FRANCIS, GEORGE MACKAY,

THE YOUNG PLP REPRESENTATIVE FOR ST. MICHAELS, AND PHILIP BETHEL, PLP MEMBER FOR GOVERNOR'S HARBOR, ALL ANNOUNCED THAT THEY WOULD ABSTAIN ON THE RESOLUTION, SINCE THEY OPPOSE GAMBLING IN ANY FORM AND PARTICULARLY OPPOSE ANY GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT IN IT. HANNA ACCUSED THE THREE OF HYPOCRISY, FRANCIS OBJECTED, AND THE HOUSE WATCHED THE TWO LEADERS OF THE "HANNA WING" OF THE PLP ENGAGE IN A VERBAL BRAWL. FRANCIS SAID THAT IN A MATTER OF INDIVIDUAL CONSCIENCE HE COULD NOT REMAIN SILENT AND HANNA RESPONDED THAT A CABINET MEMBER COULD NOT OPPOSE FOR ANY REASON A CABINET DECISION ONCE TAKEN. SPEAKER BUTLER FINALLY BROKE UP THE ARGUMENT AND FRANCIS SAT DOWN AND SCRIBBLED A TWO PAGE NOTE WHICH HE GAVE TO PINDLING AND THEN STALKED FROM THE CHAMBER. IT APPEARS THAT THE NOTE WAS HIS RESIGNATION FROM THE CABINET. COMMENT: THE FIERY FRANCIS IS A FUNDAMENTALIST BAPTIST OF STRONG MORAL VIEWS. HE HAS HAD PROBLEMS AS A MINISTER BEFORE, BUT UNTIL NOW HIS ALLIANCE WITH HANNA HAS PROTECTED HIM. IT NOW SEEMS THAT HANNA HAS WITHDRAWN HIS PROTECTION.

3. NO OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT OF FRANCIS' RESIGNATION FROM THE CABINET OR MOXEY'S FIRING HAVE BEEN MADE. EVEN MEMBERS OF FRANCIS' MINISTRY SAY THAT TOTAL CONFUSION REIGNS OVER HIS STATUS. COMMENT: THE DELAY IN ANNOUNCEMENTS MAY INDICATE EFFORTS TO PATCH THINGS UP BEHIND THE SCENES. ASSUMING THAT THE REPORTS ARE DEFINITELY CONFIRMED, IT IS DOUBTFUL THAT THE EXAMPLES OF FRANCIS AND MOXEY, BOTH OF WHOM TEND TO BE LONERS, WILL BE FOLLOWED BY OTHERS IN THE PLP. BUT, AFTER SEVERAL YEARS OF OFTEN DIFFICULT RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN US OFFICIALS AND FRANCIS, HIS LOSS WOULD BE INOPPORTUNE FROM EMBASSY POINT OF VIEW SINCE WE HAVE NOW DEVELOPED CLOSER UNDERSTANDING WITH HIM.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PERSONNEL RESIGNATIONS, CENTRAL LEGISLATURE
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 14 DEC 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973NASSAU01943
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: NASSAU
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19731224/aaaaarsy.tel
Line Count: 93
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 16 JAN 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <16-Jan-2002 by kelleyw0>; APPROVED <05-Feb-2002 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FRANCIS AND MOXEY OUT? SUMMARY: LOCAL MEDIA ARE REPORTING THAT CARLTON FRANCIS HAS
TAGS: PINT, PGOV, BF, (FRANCIS, CARLTON), (MOXEY, EDMUND)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005